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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/809,291	03/15/2001	Elazar Sonnenschein	0-05-201	5422
7590	02/16/2006		EXAMINER	
Kevin D. McCarthy Roach Brown McCarthy & Gruber, P.C. 420 Main Street - 1620 Liberty Building Buffalo, NY 14202			LEUBECKER, JOHN P	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3739	

DATE MAILED: 02/16/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/809,291	SONNENSCHEIN ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	John P. Leubecker	3739

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 July 2002.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-53,63 and 64 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) 1-53,63 and 64 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____.

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-25, drawn to an endoscopic device and method for its use, classified in class 606, subclass 139.
 - II. Claims 26-47 *, drawn to a stapling device, classified in class 227, subclass 175.1.
 - III. Claims 48-53 **, drawn to an endoscope, classified in class 600 subclass 160.
 - IV. Claims 63 and 64, drawn to a stapler cartridge, classified in class 606, subclass 219.

* Due to the inconsistencies in claim 26, it is not clear how to interpret this claim.

Particularly, since it appears to be directed to a “stapling device” and not referencing the “stapling assembly” of claim 1, and the preambular language “for the surgical endoscopic device of claim 1” appears to be only referring to an intended use with the structure of claim 1 (and thus not requiring such), it is assumed for the purposes of this restriction requirement that claim 26 is not actually dependent upon claim 1. However, references in this claim to elements of claim 1 (e.g., “said endoscopic device”, “said flexible portion”) create confusion as to whether this claim was intended to depend from and thus require the elements of claim 1. Applicant is required to clarify the intended interpretation of this claim and make necessary changes in accordance with such clarification. The Examiner reserves the right to modify this restriction requirement if such clarification warrants such modification.

** Due to the inconsistencies in claim 48, it is unclear how to interpret this claim.

Particularly, since it appears to be directed to an “endoscope”, the language “according to claim 1” is indefinite since no “endoscope” is recited in claim 1, and there are no references in any of

claims 48-53 back to any structure recited in claim 1, it is assumed for the purposes of this restriction requirement that claim 48 was not actually intended to depend from claim 1.

Applicant is required to clarify the intended interpretation of this claim and make necessary changes in accordance with such clarification. The Examiner reserves the right to modify this restriction requirement if such clarification warrants such modification.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

2. Inventions I and II are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because claim 1 does not require both a staple firing portion and an anvil portion. The subcombination has separate utility such as a wound closure device.

3. Invention I with respect to inventions III and IV are related as products which share an alleged common utility of fundoplication but the common utility is not linked to a substantial structural feature. The products in this relationship are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the products encompass embodiments that are not required to perform the common utility or (2) that the products as claimed can be used to perform another utility. In this case, the endoscope of invention III could be used in a non-fundoplication procedure (e.g.,

resection or plain observation) and the stapler cartridge of invention IV could be used in a wound closure procedure.

4. Inventions II, III and IV are related as products which share an alleged common utility of fundoplication but the common utility is not linked to a substantial structural feature. The products in this relationship are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the products encompass embodiments that are not required to perform the common utility or (2) that the products as claimed can be used to perform another utility. In this case, with respect to inventions III and IV, note numbered paragraph above. With respect to invention II, the stapler device can be used in an stapling procedure.

5. Because these inventions are independent or distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art in view of their different classification, and the inventions require a different field of search (see MPEP § 808.02), restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper. To evidence the requirement of “serious burden”, it is noted that the application of such requirement affects both search and examination of the claimed patentably distinct inventions. Therefore, as much as the search for the distinct inventions might overlap to a certain extent, there still exists the burden of separate analysis of the prior art references for each distinct invention, as well as a separate written analysis in the Office Action.

6. Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include (i) an election of a species or invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143) and (ii) identification of the claims encompassing the elected invention.

The election of an invention or species may be made with or without traverse. To reserve a right to petition, the election must be made with traverse. If the reply does not distinctly and specifically point out supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election shall be treated as an election without traverse.

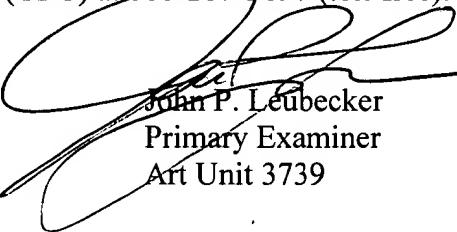
Should applicant traverse on the ground that the inventions or species are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the inventions or species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the inventions unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C.103(a) of the other invention.

7. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John P. Leubecker whose telephone number is (571) 272-4769. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM to 2:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Linda C.M. Dvorak can be reached on (571) 272-4764. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at ~~866-217-9197~~ (toll-free).



John P. Leubecker
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3739

jpl